[Mr. Speaker] [5th May 1962

3. Sri G. Gomathi Sankara Dikshithar
4. Sri T. Karcha Gowder
5. Srimathi P. K. R. Lakshmikantham
6. Sri V. A. Muthiah
7. Sri S. Nanjunda Row
8. Sri P. Palani Pillai
9. Sri N. Rajangam
10. Sri A. Ramachandra Rayar
11. Sri R. S. Veerappa Chettiar

As the number of candidates who were duly nominated is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, viz., eleven, I hereby declare them to have been duly elected to the House Committee.

Under rule 221 (1) of the Madras Legislative Assembly Rules, I hereby nominate (1) Sri P. Ramachandran, (2) Sri N. Sountharapandian, (3) Sri T. B. Kesavan and (4) Sri KR. RM. Kariamanicka Ambalam, to the members of the House Committee.

The Deputy Speaker is the Ex-Officio Chairman of the House Committee.

III.—CALLING ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR DECLARATION OF PALLADAM AND DHARAPURAM TALUKS AS FAMINE AREA.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. Member Sri K. N. Palaniswamy Gounder will call the attention of the Hon. Minister for Works to a matter of urgent public importance.

Sri K. N. PALANISWAMY GOUNDER : Sir, I call the attention of the Hon. Minister for Works to a matter of urgent public importance, viz., declaration of Palladam and Dharapuram taluks in Coimbatore District as Famine Area.

The Hon. Sri V. RAMAIAH : Sir, I rise to make the following statement :—

Palladam and Dharapuram taluks are known to be the distress pockets in Coimbatore District. The rainfall in those two taluks has been below normal during the last decade. However, the position has to some extent been relieved by good showers in many parts of the two taluks recently. The ryots have started ploughing and have sown gingelly and if there is another shower in a fortnight, a good harvest can be expected.

2. The Government are aware of the scarcity of drinking water felt in the taluks of Dharapuram and Palladam and they have proposed to sanction an allotment of Rs. 5 lakhs for deepening of wells. The Collector has been permitted to go ahead with the deepening of wells with the aid of power drills in bigger villages. Instructions have been issued to the Commissioners of Panchayat Unions to take up the work and the deepening of the existing wells is in progress. The pond works constructed during last year have

benefited to a great extent in raising the water table in the adjoining villages and it has been proposed to execute similar pond works during the current year also.

3. As a result of the recent rains, "Kolukkatai", grass is coming up and with an additional shower there will be a marked improvement in the pasture position. The ryots are at present getting their requirements of paddy straw from Lower Bhavani Project, Amaravathi Reservoir Project ayacut areas in Coimbatore District and Palani taluk in Madurai District. There is no need at present to make any special arangements for the import of fodder from other districts.

4. The excavation of major and minor canals of Parambikulam-Aliyar Project in these two taluks at an estimated cost of about Rs. 458 lakhs will provide employment to a substantial number of people. Special grants are also proposed to be sanctioned for execution of road works outside the village grant. A sum of Rs. 1 lakh has been proposed to be sanctioned for executing road works in Palladam Block and another allotment of nearly rupees one lakh will also be made for the formation of road works in Palladam and Dharapuram taluks for providing employment. Soil conservation work covering an area of 75,000 acres and costing nearly Rs. 4 lakhs has been started in Kunda dam Block in Dharapuram taluk.

5. The average assessment of land revenue in these two taluks including the local cess and local cess surcharge comes only to Rs. 1-13 nP. or Rs. 1-25 nP. per acre. Hence it may not be difficult for the ryots to pay the land revenue. A major portion of the land revenue has already been paid by the ryots and any postponements at present will adversely affect the finances of the Panchayat Unions. The postponement of loan collections ordered in the past had resulted in the accumulation of large arrears. In fact, only a few ryots who have taken large number of loans under various heads find it difficult to repay the loan instalments on account of misapplication of loans. Steps have been taken to ensure that coercive measures are applied only in the case of recalcitrant defaulters, i.e., those who can afford 'to pay' but do not, and the loan amounts due from the rest will be collected with sympathy and consideration. Hence there appears to be no need to postpone land revenue and loan instalments.

6. In view of the circumstances explained earlier, it will be clear that there is no cause for any alarm and that there is no need either to declare the two taluks as 'famine areas'.

7. In conclusion, I may assure the hon. member that the Government are fully alive to the seasonal conditions prevailing in the two taluks and that besides taking all steps necessary to afford relief in the affected areas, they are also keeping a close and vigilant watch over the situation so that prompt and appropriate action is taken to meet any emergency or distress conditions if they arise in those areas.